

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 23, 2013

The Honorable Chuck Hagel
Secretary
The Department of Defense
Washington, DC 20301

Secretary Hagel:

We write to express concern about the recent decision to include Department of Defense (DoD) educators in the pool of civilians subject to furlough due to the sequestration measures recently implemented within the Department.

Your May 14, 2013 directive states that teachers, educational aids and support staff in the Department of Defense Educational Activity (DoDEA) run schools will face up to 5 furlough days. Military dependents could lose school days and vital services while many of their parents are fighting overseas.

The timing of these furloughs is especially damaging as they will be forced into the first month of school next year, impacting students' access to high quality education. Furloughs will harm students and send the wrong message to the men and women who selflessly serve in our military. Although we appreciate the challenge you face with furloughing a majority of the Department's 800,000 civilians to cut costs, your guidance already exempts many sectors within DoD.

To minimize the impact of the sequester on the children of our military and their families, we ask that you exempt Department of Defense educators from furlough. These individuals are one of the most significant factors in student learning as well as a vital source of stability for military children. The idea that we would look to them as a cost saving mechanism concerns us greatly. This is not the way to deal with the fiscal constraints imposed by sequestration. We do not believe these children's education should have to suffer because of dysfunction here in Washington.

Our fiscal situation is going to require shared sacrifice, but our service members and their families continue to make great sacrifices for all of us every day. When we send our men and women into harm's way, our responsibility is to provide their dependents with a quality of life that reflects the high standards and pride in the nation they defend. Ten years of war has placed an exceptional amount of strain on these families, and we owe it to them to provide the best educational services for their children.

Sincerely,


Senator Mark R. Warner


Senator Kay R. Hagan


Senator Kirsten Gillibrand